



# EXTERNAL PARASITES OF POULTRY

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The presence of external parasites in Alberta poultry flocks is all too prevalent. This retards growth and checks egg production to a considerable extent, and, if present to an excessive degree, constitutes a definite menace to the health of the flock and often results in heavy mortality.

## BODY LICE

Several species of body lice affect domestic poultry. All are equipped with biting mouth parts and live upon the skin and feathers of the birds and spend their entire life on the fowl. They are extremely active, thus causing constant irritation. They are most easily detected around the vent and under the wings.

**TREATMENT:** The most common remedy is the use of nicotine sulphate, commonly referred to as Black Leaf 40. A small amount is painted along the top of the roosts just before roosting time. The warmth of the bird's body causes fumes to rise through the feathers, killing the lice. Treatment should be repeated in ten days' time to destroy lice that have hatched after the first treatment.

Sodium Fluoride is often used as a dust, a pinch being placed under the vent and wings. Ointments also are used, but the nicotine sulphate treatment will be found to be the most efficient.

## HEAD LICE

These are found about the head and neck of the birds. They can be treated by rubbing a salve consisting of one part blue ointment and two parts vaseline, well into the feathers of the head and neck.

## RED MITES

Unlike lice, the so-called red mite does not live on the birds and is a blood sucker. It hides under the perches, in cracks along the walls, or in dark corners and in the nests during the day, and feeds on the birds at night. When present in any number, the under side of the roosts and along wall cracks, show an accumulation of grayish material as though sprinkled with pepper.

**TREATMENT:** Thoroughly clean the drop boards, roosts, nests, walls and floors first thing in the morning, burning all material. Thoroughly

spray the walls, drop boards, nests and roosts with a good disinfectant solution (three parts coal oil to one part crude carbolic), paying particular attention to cracks and crevices. Paint the bottom, joints and ends of the roosts with a strong disinfectant.

### **DEPLUMING MITES**

These are not as common as the red mites. This type of mite burrows into the quill just under the skin surface, causing the feather to break off. The Black Leaf 40 treatment, as for body lice, is effective. Affected parts may be rubbed with an ointment consisting of one part flowers of sulphur and five parts vaseline.

### **NORTHERN MITES**

In Alberta this mite is usually found on the birds during the colder weather, and may be found about the house as well as on the birds. If present, the house should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, all refuse being burned. Some have reported good results by using the Black Leaf 40 treatment. Others find it necessary to use blue ointment and vaseline, rubbing well in around the tail and vent.



The leg of a chicken as it commonly appears in scaly leg.—Courtesy of Kansas State Agricultural College.

### **SCALY LEG MITES**

A small mite which works up under the scales of the toes and shanks, causing a rough, unsightly appearance. (See illustration.) In extreme cases, lameness and loss of production result. Soak the legs of all affected birds in warm soapy water for a few minutes, then wash well and dry. Rub carbolated vaseline into the scales. Clean and burn the litter and lime the runs.